

# Achy breaky Menace

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

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Retro-gaming YouTube celeb, Manga/Anime illustrator, pundit, voice-over artist, and all-round jovial chappy, Guru Larry, uploaded one of his latest 'fact hunt' videos recently. This one concerns a selection of five games that he alleges were deliberately designed to be impossible to complete to hide that they weren't finished, either because the developers couldn't be bothered, or they simply ran out of time.

One example in particular - Dennis for the Amiga - struck me as a tad dubious because I distinctly remember beating it as a kid without first going to the strife of learning to be a programmer, reverse engineering the game and fixing it to quench my frenzied thirst for a near-static 'the end' message.



As legend would have it, in Larry's own words, "Ocean decided to be extra dickish and make a game you'd slog through for hours impossible to beat simply because they ran out of time to finish it. Well that or they knew no-one gave a s\*\*t about the Amiga by 1993 so shoved it out the door assuming no-one would buy the bloody thing anyway."

He claims the crucial impasse is a deviously positioned out-of-reach platform found on the final level. Fail to pull off this by-design "impossible jump" and you are disavowed the opportunity to progress and take on your ultimate nemesis, Switchblade Sam... which of course you couldn't do in any case because Ocean supposedly didn't get round to coding his cameo, or the game's conclusion because they were so preoccupied with finishing the SNES incarnation.

As the story goes, the issue is only apparent in the Amiga 500 version of the game, not the 1200 or CD32, which is odd because Amiga developers were notorious for merely tarding up their releases for the more 'Advanced Graphics

Architecture' with a splash of extra colour or a CD soundtrack, as was the case with Dennis. There's no plausible reason Ocean would have to rework the final encounter for the various flavours. The game would either be finished or it wouldn't.

To confirm either that my mind has gone to mush since 1993, or Larry is somehow misinformed, I booted up the ECS version of the game and set about completing - or *almost* completing - it as the case may be.

Given that life is short and Dennis was never much fun to begin with, I played the cracked Fairlight release with a built-in 'trainer' to grant me an infinite supply of lives and energy and the ability to skip levels. Regrettably, it doesn't do anything to fix the perennial five-second loop that passes for a soundtrack!

Feeling especially suicidal (possibly because the weekend is still a few days off and I live in Manchester), I mooched around the final level attempting to locate something that looked like an insurmountable chasm to throw myself down. That Larry didn't reveal any footage of the irksome pit (because he played the wrong version according to the YouTube comment section for the video) didn't help matters one iota. I failed miserably, eventually gave up and skipped to the 'Guardian of the Scrolling Credits', the swan-song boss. Low and behold, Switchblade Sam looking uncannily like Freddy Krueger sans the hat and blade-fingers, the final confrontation Ocean didn't have time to include, checked in as if by magic and proceeded to hurl apples at me (Braeburns if I'm not mistaken - details matter!). I pea-shootered him into oblivion and held aloft my trophy; the 'congrats' screen that shouldn't be there either.



You didn't think for a minute I'd let slide that comment concerning a lack of interest in the Amiga at the time of Dennis' release did you? Actually 1993 bore witness to the emergence of some of the platforms' most notable titles. To name-drop but a few, these included, Ambermoon, Cannon Fodder, Championship Manager '93, Lemmings 2, Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Frontier: Elite II, The Lost Vikings, The Settlers, Syndicate, Superfrog, Pinball Fantasies and Simon the Sorcerer. Of course, the Amiga's untimely demise was right around the next corner. Nevertheless, no-one had stopped to inform the games developers who continued to churn out award-winning titles, some of them well into the late nineties!

Prior to this, Larry shares another trivia tidbit concerning an earlier Ocean game: "The Commodore 64 version is also the only port where RoboCop can jump!"

That's entirely true, though *only* if you ignore the existence of the Atari ST and Amiga renditions where you first have to

pull down to crouch and then push upwards to leap into the air, or press the spacebar.

I'll remain a massive fan of your work, Mr Bundy, but don't think that will stop me lodging a complaint with Trading Standards if you continue to call this series of videos a 'fact hunt'.

This has been a party political broadcast on behalf of the Nerd Brigade. Thank you for listening.

